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## Centennial Initiative News Release



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### Centennial proposals eligible for matching funds

Fruita & Grand Junction, CO - Colorado National Monument proposes to expand its Junior Ranger Program to include a Junior Ranger Explorer Camp for underserved youth. Colorado National Monument's Junior Ranger Explorer day camp is one of 201 proposals National Park Service Director Mary Bomar and Secretary of the Interior Dirk Kempthorne announced at a press conference in Yosemite National Park today to celebrate the 91<sup>st</sup> anniversary of the NPS.

"The National Park Service has, after a rigorous review, certified these proposals as eligible for centennial challenge matching funds," Bomar said. "And they are ready to go in Fiscal Year 2008 which begins Oct. 1".

Colorado National Monument's Junior Ranger Explorer day camp is one of nearly \$370 million dollars worth of proposals eligible for centennial challenge matching funds. Through the Centennial Challenge Initiative Colorado National Monument will plan to institute a summer Junior Ranger Explorer day camp for youth, ages 9-11. This program will specifically target local, underserved youth who would otherwise be unable to visit the park. The program will expand and enhance the present Junior Ranger program for local youth and will be designed to conform to the new Junior Ranger standards. It will engage youth in place-based, enjoyable, hands-on activities that allow them to explore and discover the significance of the park's resources and introduce them to the national park system and mission.

Director Bomar said, "The centennial challenge is a critical element in the National Park Centennial Initiative put forward by President Bush and unveiled by Secretary Kempthorne one year ago. The full centennial initiative is a potential \$3 billion investment in our national parks, two-thirds of it a public-private partnership of matching money."

The President's fiscal year 2008 budget called for an additional \$100 million a year for 10 years to be dedicated to bolster basic park operations, Bomar said. Congress has included the first \$100 million for operations in the fiscal year 2008 budget that awaits final passage.

"The second part of the initiative is the centennial challenge – a funding mechanism to match up to \$100 million a year over 10 years of public money with \$100 million a year for 10 years in private donations," Bomar said. "Legislation is pending before Congress to create the public-private centennial challenge."  
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Financial commitments to the first round of proposals exceeded the President's challenge. "We have approximately \$370 million in proposals with \$216 million committed from park visitors, friends groups and other partners," Bomar said. "This far exceeds the \$100 million in private commitments needed to move forward and speaks volumes about the private sector's support of national parks."

"I've testified before Senate and House subcommittees and judging by the warm reception we received, I believe Congress will include centennial challenge money in our next budget. We look forward to working with members from both sides of the aisle to provide the key to the centennial challenge. When that happens we can make decisions on which of these wonderful proposals to begin in the fall."

Locally, Superintendent Joan Anzelmo, said, "the Colorado National Monument Association (CNMA) has committed matching money for the Junior Ranger Explorer day camp". Anzelmo further stated, "I am extremely grateful to our partner, the Colorado National Monument Association, who stepped forward and committed funds to make this wonderful opportunity for area youth a possibility. The new fiscal year begins Oct. 1 and we are excited to get this centennial project underway."

To be certified, proposals had to be imaginative and innovative, addressed critical Service needs, had a philanthropic partner, required little or no additional recurring operating funds to be sustainable, improved the efficiency of park management, operations and employees and produced measurable results.

Examples of other proposals:

- Lewis and Clark National Historical Park adopting the Class of 2016 with the goal of turning students to stewards.
- Additional student education through Acadia National Park's "No Child Left Inside" project.
- Strengthening efforts to save Kemp's Ridley sea turtles – the world's most endangered sea turtle – with citizens assisting park rangers to observe and relocate nests on Padre Island National Seashore, the turtle's most important U.S. nesting habitat.
- Restoration of more than 50 miles of important foot trails in Yosemite National Park.
- Climate change research of glaciers at Mount Rainier National Park and
- Utilizing scientists and volunteers to study life along the Appalachian Trail seeing national parks as an environmental barometer.

"There is a huge wave of excitement among National Park Service professionals and our partners," Bomar said. "We will create park-based centers for Junior Rangers, implement cutting-edge energy projects like fuel cells and geothermal and build multimedia wayside exhibits that "talk" to visitors. This is a victory for national parks and over 270 million park visitors we see each year."

"Last week, I sent an email to the men and women of the National Park Service to inform them of our announcement. One of the replies I received says it best: "This is thrilling! A win/win opportunity like we've never seen before. Thanks for the energy and vision for the NPS."

"That thanks," Bomar said, "is for the many who worked to transform vision into action: Secretary Kempthorne and our friends in Congress, from both sides of the aisle who introduced legislation to support the Centennial. But most of all, our thanks go to park superintendents, friends groups, partners and an army of supporters."

"When history is written," Bomar said, "the Centennial Initiative will be second only to the creation of the national park system itself."

The full list of centennial challenge-eligible projects and programs is available on-line at the National Park Service centennial web site [www.nps.gov/2016](http://www.nps.gov/2016)

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